

- » Understanding the various types of landing pages and when to use them
- » Building landing pages that generate leads and make sales
- » Evaluating the effectiveness of landing pages
- » Converting visitors to your landing page into buyers

## Chapter 7

# Building High-Converting Landing Pages

**L**anding pages are fundamental to digital marketing. The broadest way to define a landing page is as any page where a visitor enters your website. For the purposes of this book, we use a more specific definition: A *landing page* is a web page designed to persuade a visitor to take a specific action. Your website should contain a landing page for each offer you make to prospects and customers. These are the pages toward which savvy digital marketers funnel traffic from all sources both internal and external to their website.

The performance of your landing pages will make or break your digital marketing campaigns. You can master the art of driving web traffic, but if the landing page fails to do its job, the campaign is doomed. In this chapter, we examine the elements of a winning landing page. We also tell you about the different types of landing pages and when to use each kind, how to assess the success of your landing pages, and how to convert customers into buyers.

# Exploring the Types of Landing Pages

You categorize landing pages by the specific action you want the site visitor to take. For example, some landing pages are designed to persuade visitors to enter their contact information, whereas others ask the visitor to buy a product or service. The campaigns that most digital marketers run fall into one of two landing page categories:

- » **Lead capture page:** Sometimes called a *squeeze page*, this page's goal is to persuade site visitors to enter their contact information so that they become leads.
- » **Sales page:** This page is designed to persuade a visitor to purchase a physical product, information product, or service.

There are many ways to design and lay out a good landing page, but they all have one thing in common: focus. A solid landing page has a singular goal and as few distractions as possible. The focal point of the page should be the action you want the visitor to take.

The typical website home page is, for example, a page designed to allow the visitor to make a variety of choices. From the home page, a visitor can click a link to visit a product page, learn more about the company, or visit the company blog. For this reason, the home page of the website is a poor landing page in almost every circumstance. A home page simply presents visitors with too many choices.

A landing page should strive to plug as many “leaks” from the page as possible. This means removing links to other offers, more information, and anything else that isn't absolutely necessary to achieve the goal for that page. Figure 7-1 shows a landing page with as few links as possible to minimize distractions and increase the chances of prospects opting in.



WARNING

Most sources of traffic, such as Facebook advertising and the Google Ads network, require you to have links to some pertinent pages, such as a Privacy Policy and Terms of Use page. Check the Terms of Service of each traffic platform before you run traffic to a landing page.



**FIGURE 7-1:**  
A landing page  
with a clear focus  
and very few  
links.

Source: <http://www.digitalmarketer.com/1p/fb-ad-templates/>

## SHOULD YOU USE A LANDING PAGE BUILDER?

Building landing pages from scratch can be intimidating. How do you construct a page with a design and layout designed to persuade site visitors to take action? How do you produce a page with a clear focus on the desired action and as few distractions or “leaks” from the page as possible? One option is to hire a web page designer and developer who understands how to build custom web pages that convert visitors into leads and sales.

For most businesses, creating custom landing pages is unnecessary. Much more cost effective is to use an application that provides landing page templates. These applications provide templates for virtually any circumstance in lead capture or sales. Look for a landing page builder that fits your budget and provides you with the templates that fit your circumstances. For example, if you expect to capture leads using webinars, you want to use a landing page application that provides a webinar registration template and integrates well with the webinar delivery application you’re using. We make recommendations for both landing page and webinar applications in Chapter 16.

# Creating a Lead Capture Page

The lead capture page, sometimes called a *squeeze page*, is an important landing page type to any business that benefits from lead generation. As demonstrated in Figure 7-1, the lead capture page is an extremely focused page containing most of the following:

- » **A gated offer:** A small “chunk” of value that solves a *specific* problem for a *specific* market that is offered in exchange for their contact information. You can learn more about gated offers in Chapter 3.
- » **Headline/subheadline:** Text at the top of the page that compels the site visitor to read the bullets and consider taking the gated offer on the page. We cover headline strategies in Chapter 5. Although the headline tactics discussed in Chapter 5 focus on blogs, you can also apply them to the headline of your landing page.
- » **Bullets:** Strong statements that outline the benefits of the gated offer.
- » **Product image:** If you can show a visual representation of the gated offer, do so. This approach may not be applicable to all offers.
- » **Proof:** Include trust icons such as logos of associations you are a member of, reputable brands you are associated with, or testimonials from satisfied customers.
- » **Lead form:** The form is the mechanism that actually collects the contact information.



REMEMBER

Ask only for information that you plan to use in your marketing. In general, the more information you ask for in your form, the lower your conversion rate will be. So if, for example, you don't plan to follow up via telephone, don't ask for a phone number in the lead form.

# Creating a Sales Page

The sales page is designed to persuade the site visitor to take a specific action: make a purchase. Sales pages come in many forms, but most digital marketing campaigns require one of two types of sales page:

- » **Sales letter:** You can sell services, information products, and even physical products using a sales letter. For decades, marketers have crafted long-form text and video pitches aiming to persuade the prospective customer to buy.

Sales letters are typically information-heavy. A person reading a sales letter is deciding to buy and should therefore receive as much information as possible. The sales letter should demonstrate why the product or service on the sales page provides value, as well as help to overcome any last-minute objections the person may have. This usually result in a lot of written or video copy. Figure 7-2 shows an excerpt of a DigitalMarketer sales letter landing page for one of our products.



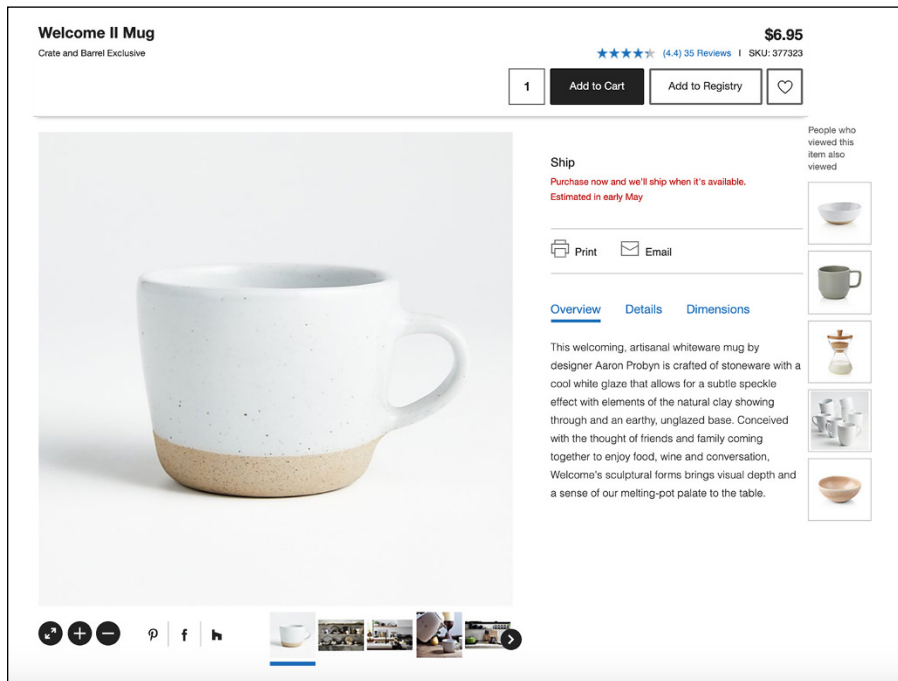
Source: <http://www.digitalmarketer.com/lp/sbp/get-content-engine/>

**FIGURE 7-2:**  
An example of a landing page for a product.

» **Product detail page:** Unique to e-commerce businesses, the product detail page is a staple landing page for the digital marketer selling physical products and, in rarer cases, information products or services. Figure 7-3 pictures a classic product detail page from retailer, Crate & Barrel. This product detail page includes everything the prospect needs to make a purchase decision:

- **Product name:** The product name is descriptive and specific about what is being offered.
- **Call to action:** The "Add to Cart" button is easy to find.
- **Product price:** The price is in an intuitive location and is shown side by side with the suggested price.

- **Product images/video:** Multiple, high-quality photographs of the product showing everything you'll receive.
- **Product description:** Product description including the overview, details, and dimensions of the product.
- **Quantity option:** The capability to select more than one product.
- **Product reviews:** Easy to locate reviews from previous customers who have purchased the product.
- **Wish list:** The capability to add the product to a list to be purchased later. Crate & Barrel's call to action for this feature is "Add to Registry" and "Add to Favorites."
- **Social media buttons:** The capability to share the product page on social sites like Facebook and Pinterest.
- **Shipping information:** Shipping information is easy to locate and the policy is easy to understand.
- **Product videos:** A video demonstrating the product in action.
- **Upsells/Cross-sells:** Additional products this prospect might be interested in. Crate & Barrel refers to this as "People who viewed this item also bought."



**FIGURE 7-3:**  
A classic product  
detail page from  
e-commerce  
behemoth Crate  
& Barrel.

Source: <https://www.crateandbarrel.com/welcome-mug/s377323>

# Writing a sales letter

Mastering copywriting is a bit like mastering a craft such as pottery or oil painting: It involves a tremendous amount of art. That said, writing persuasive copy starts with understanding the fundamental components of a sales letter. In truth, you can apply the principles that comprise a persuasive sales letter to all your communications, including emails, blog posts, presentation titles, and more.

A beginner can use the process we describe here verbatim, but as you become more comfortable with the process, feel free to change it to meet your circumstances. A sales letter, above all else, should be truthful and therefore might not contain some of the elements outlined in this process simply because they don't apply to your offer.

Here are the steps of the process required to write a well-crafted sales letter. You can refer to this as a checklist to ensure that you've included all the essential elements of a persuasive letter:

1. Craft the headline.
2. Write the subheadline.
3. Write the opening.
4. Show ease of use.
5. Forecast the future.
6. Establish credibility.
7. Write bullets that sell.
8. Show proof.
9. Make the offer.
10. Sweeten the deal.
11. Communicate urgency.
12. Reverse risk.
13. Make the call to action.

The following sections explain each part of the sales letter.

## Step 1: Craft the headline

The headline is the first thing that people read and is therefore the most critical piece of copy on the page. If you're just getting started, use a "How To" headline because they are simple to write and very effective. The How To headline will

apply to 99 percent of the offers you are promoting. Of course, your offer may require a different kind of headline. If that's the case, use a search engine such as Google to search for a list of proven headlines. You can find dozens of blog post articles that provide fantastic headline formulas.

Don't start with a clever headline. Start with clear, simple, and direct language that communicates the benefit to reading the sales letter copy. Clear and direct almost always converts better than clever and confusing. Later, when you get more comfortable with copywriting, you can get clever.

Take a look at the following How To headline formulas and feel free to use them (filling in the blanks with your pertinent information) or to provide inspiration:

How to Get *[desired result]* in *[time period]*

How to Turn *[blank]* into *[desired result]*

How to *[desired result]* When You're Not *[blank]*

How to Fast-Track *[desired result]*

How to *[desired result]* Even If *[something challenging]*

For example, this last headline formula might be used to write a headline at the top of a sales letter that reads: How to Buy a Home Even if You've Declared Bankruptcy.

## Step 2: Write the subheadline

The subheadline is optional but is often needed to elaborate on the headline. Once again, you can find dozens of articles online that provide lists of classic headline formulas. Here are a few to get you started:

Discover How Quickly You Can *[desired result]*

Learn How Easily You Can *[desired result]*

You, Too, Can Have *[desired result]* in *[desirable time period]*

What Everybody Ought to Know about *[blank]*

How *[authoritative person]* Got *[desired result]* in *[time period]*

For example, the last headline formula might be used to write a subheadline that reads: How Serena Williams Got in The Best Shape of Her Life in 14 Days.





REMEMBER

You made a claim or promise in the headline you created in Step 1. Your subheadline should support the headline. It shouldn't introduce a new claim or promise, and it certainly shouldn't conflict with it.

### Step 3: Write the opening

By the time your landing page visitors are reading your opening, they have read the headline and subheadline. Some readers have even scrolled to the bottom of your letter to see the price and offer. In other words, they are interested.

If you're just getting started, try the classic "Problem/Solution" opening to a sales letter. In the first step of the opening, you identify the problem that the prospective buyer has.



TIP

Your visitors are wondering whether you truly understand their problem. As the marketer, your job is to establish common ground between you and your visitors. Show empathy for the problem and be specific about their state of discontent.

Next, you want to reveal that a solution to this problem exists, and it is your product or service (of course!). You don't need to go into great detail about the product or service at this point; you do that later.

For example, if you're selling tax preparation services, you might open your sales letter with the following:

It's that time of year again. April 15th is drawing near, and you've got an entire weekend circled on your calendar to dig up all those receipts and tax documents.

Let's face it, preparing your own taxes is frustrating at best.

If you'd rather spend that beautiful spring weekend with friends and family, let our firm handle your taxes this year.

### Step 4: Show ease of use

The key to this part of your sales letter is to communicate (if applicable) that your solution is easy to do or quick to deliver results (or both). Now more than ever, prospective customers want results quickly and easily. If you can demonstrate ease of use or speed of results through text, images, or video, do it.

### Step 5: Forecast the future

In this part of the sales letter page, you paint a picture in the minds of your readers of what it will look like if they solve their problem. You want your readers to imagine and feel the sense of being free of their problem.

The easiest way to start this section of the sales letter is by filling in the following blank:

Imagine what it would be like to \_\_\_\_\_.

For example, Ford Motor Company might write the following to sell the Mustang GT:

Imagine pressing the gas pedal and feeling the thrill of the Mustang's 435 horsepower engine.



TIP

What problem does buying a Mustang GT solve, anyway? It won't cure customers of the flu or get them out of credit card debt. In Chapter 1, we talk about articulating the customer's movement from the Before state to the After state. In your sales copy, you must be able to articulate the value of that After state. In the case of the Mustang, you're freeing people from their boring, old, and slow car of the Before state and delivering to them a new, beautiful, and exhilarating car.

## Step 6: Establish credibility

In this step of putting together your sales letter, you need to address a question in your visitors' minds: Why you?

That is, why are you or your organization qualified to solve their problem? You need to establish why the solution you have is credible. You have a number of ways to demonstrate your credibility, including the following:

- » **Use a testimonial:** If you have a broad testimonial from a happy customer that fortifies your credibility, you can place it here.
- » **Give your credentials:** Provide any credentials that give people a reason to believe in you as a solution — for example, you're a doctor, earned your MBA, served as an Air Force pilot, or other credential that relates to the type of solution you're offering.
- » **Borrow credentials:** If you know someone whose credentials are worthy and who endorses you and your product, identify that person here (and include his or her endorsement, if you have permission).
- » **Tell your story:** Have you had an experience that makes you qualified to solve this problem? (Gotten over your stage fright, taught yourself to walk again, lost 50 pounds?) Tell that story.
- » **Use impressive numbers:** If you have impressive data, years' worth of experience, or numbers of successful customers, use them here.

Remember that at this point, no one who doesn't have the problem you're describing is reading this copy. At this point in the sales letter, you must explain why you're qualified to solve the problem.

## Step 7: Write bullets that sell

Although you hope that the reader of your sales letter will read every word you write, the truth is that most people will only skim your letter. Adding bullets to your sales letter breaks up the text and often causes even the most hurried skimmer to pause and read. You should include three to five bullets that explain the benefits of your offer. Take your time on this step, but don't get bogged down. For your first draft, this step should take no longer than 30 minutes. You can come back and spend more time on these benefits after you have created this first draft.



TIP

This is not the time to explain the product or service you are offering. This is the time to outline the benefits your reader will receive if they buy your product or service.

Remember that people don't buy products and services; rather, they buy a desired outcome:

- » They don't buy cold medicine; they buy a good night's sleep.
- » They don't buy a gym membership; they buy a shapely or healthier body.
- » They don't buy pest control; they buy a clean, safe home for their children.

## Step 8: Show proof

In this step of writing your sales letter, you create the most important element of your copy: proof. Proof isn't the same thing as credibility or the credibility of your organization, which you established in an earlier step. Establishing your credibility creates trust, but throughout your copy, you've started to introduce promises to your readers. Now you need to substantiate those promises by providing proof of your claims. If you're selling a physical product, this is a good time to demonstrate, through video or images, how the product works and show it doing the things you described in the bullets you wrote earlier.

Infomercials have mastered the concept of showing proof. They show knives cutting through nails and then easily slicing a tomato, or they demonstrate a cleanser removing a red wine stain. Proof appears in many forms, including:

- » **Demonstration:** If you can show that it works, do it.
- » **Social proof:** If you have testimonials that fortify the claims you've made, include them here. Mention how many other people have benefited from your solution.

- » **Data or research:** Use data and research that you have conducted yourself or from reputable sources.
- » **Borrowed credibility:** Find and use information from reputable sources such as *The New York Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, or trade associations.

The higher the risk involved in your offer, the more proof your buyers will need to feel comfortable in making a purchase with you.



WARNING

If you can't properly substantiate a claim you've made, consider removing it. A claim or promise with no proof can do more harm than good.

## Step 9: Make the offer

The offer you make to your readers should include exactly what they can expect to receive if they give you money. Most important is for your offer to be clear and not at all confusing. If your readers have even a shadow of a doubt as to what they will get, they won't buy. Here are some examples of information to include for the sake of clarity:

- » Will you ship a product? How long will it take to get there?
- » What are the dimensions of the product? What is the weight?
- » How much does it cost? Are payment terms available? Do you accept American Express?

Think through the questions that your readers might have about the offer and be sure to answer all those questions.

## Step 10: Sweeten the deal

You may find that bonuses are not applicable to your offer. However, if you can add bonuses, you will almost certainly increase response. Perhaps you can add, at no additional cost to your buyers, a bonus product to the first 100 people who respond. Or give those who buy before a specified date an additional discount.

Adding a bonus is a great way to increase urgency (covered in Step 11) by taking those bonuses away after a certain date, or after a certain quantity has been sold.

## Step 11: Communicate urgency

Adding urgency to your offer, if appropriate to your product or service, gets your readers to take action now, which is what you want. If they decide to think about it or to do it later, they're unlikely to return.

You can persuade people to take action now by communicating the urgency of taking the offer now. If they believe they could come back tomorrow, next week, or next year and get the same offer, they're less likely to take action now.

Don't manufacture scarcity or urgency, but if you have a real reason that people should take action now, be sure to communicate it. Here are some examples:

- » Register for this event now; there are only 32 seats remaining.
- » Buy now: This offer is available only until midnight, January 26.
- » Only 1,000 of these coins were created by the U.S. mint.

Another way of creating urgency in your sales letter is with a simple statement, such as, "Think how much it is costing you every day that you don't take action on this problem."

## Step 12: Reverse risk

In this step of the sales letter, you add *risk reversal*, which provides people with a feeling of security about the purchase. You have numerous ways to reduce risk, including by

- » Providing a guarantee
- » Offering a free trial
- » Providing a return policy
- » Using trust seals, including association membership logos, BBB insignia, secure checkout seals, and so on

## Step 13: Make the call to action

A call to action tells people exactly what you want them to do and how to do it. It's a simple command statement, such as "Click the Add to Cart button below."

# Understanding the elements of a product detail page

Product detail pages, also known simply as product pages, are the most important pages on an e-commerce website. When prospects visit your product page and look at the images, read the descriptions, and consume the customer reviews, they are showing interest and thinking about purchasing your product. The product

page is the make-or-break point that determines how successful your e-commerce store is. Your product page needs to get people to ascend to the next level: conversion. So pay extra attention to your product page or pages. The following sections describe the elements of successful product pages.

## Product images

Although buying online is convenient, it can be a detriment because people can't physically pick up and examine the product the way they do in a brick-and-mortar store. People don't buy products on the Internet; rather, they buy pictures of products. To overcome the fact that the prospects can't hold or touch your product, include as many high-quality images of the product as is necessary to fully convey its features and attributes. Make sure you show the product from a variety of directions and environments so that customers can get an idea of the size. If you can show the item in use, even better.



REMEMBER

People buy based on what the product looks like, and the more complex or expensive the product is, the more pictures are necessary to successfully show the product.

## Image zoom

Give people the ability to zoom in on your product image so that they can get a close look at the product, its texture or features, and how it's used. Image zoom can also help overcome doubts potential customers may have because it gives people a chance to examine a product before they put it in their shopping cart.

## Product description

Be sure to include a well-written product description that is immediately visible on the page so that prospects can quickly learn about the product's features without having to dig through the page for more information. Don't skimp on the product description. Describe its unique selling points and how it solves people's problems or improves their lives. Aim to create product descriptions with 250 words or more, and include the keywords that you're targeting within the description. Including those keywords improves the product's search marketing, which we discuss in Chapter 8. Similar to product images, the more complex or expensive a product is, the more detail is required. To improve readability and user experience, organize the product description with headlines, bullets, and step lists.

## Product sales video

The product sales video is a great medium to demonstrate the product in use and is an extremely effective tool to make your sales pitch. Products that are expensive or complex do well with a sales video. Also, the product sales video is a fantastic

way to overcome objections a potential customer may have. If you do include a sales video, make it easy to find rather than buried at the bottom of the page.

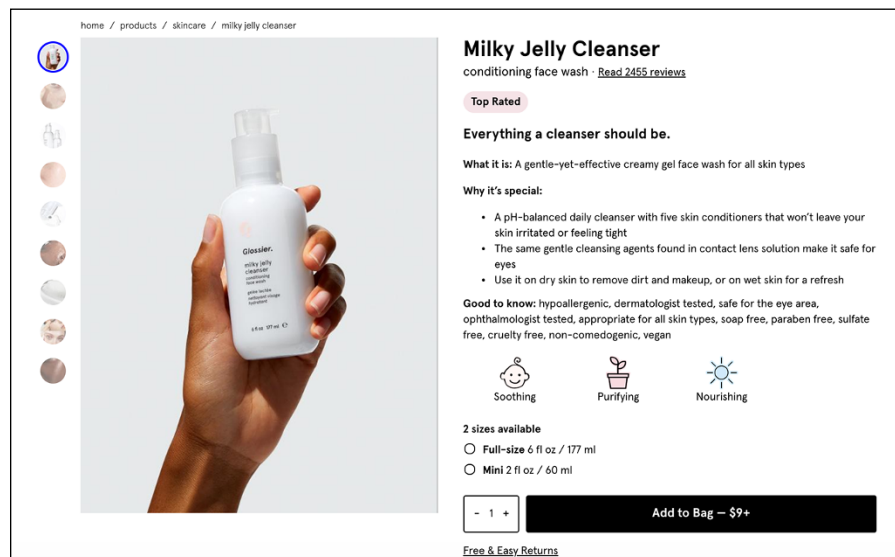
## Third-party pitch video

This type of video is also called an endorsement or press video, and it's basically a second product sales video. Although not essential, third-party endorsements can significantly increase conversion on a product page. This type of video features someone who's not associated with your brand actively recommending your brand and product. This is similar to a celebrity endorsement, although you don't need a celebrity for this video to be effective. Third-party pitch videos are often scripted and professionally shot.

## Call to action

The call to action on a product page is typically an Add To Cart button. This button must be highly visible and accessible to the consumer. The Add to Cart button should be easy to locate on both desktop and mobile devices. Depending on the length of your product page, consider adding multiple Add to Cart buttons so that people can add your product to their cart no matter where they are on your page. You should also ensure that the call to action on your button matches the action clicking the button creates. If clicking the button takes them to a check out page, consider using Complete Purchase or Check Out as your button text. (See Figure 7-4.)

**FIGURE 7-4:**  
Glossier, a popular skincare brand, has their price listed right on the call to action button.



Source: <https://www.glossier.com/products/milky-jelly-cleanser>

## Reviews

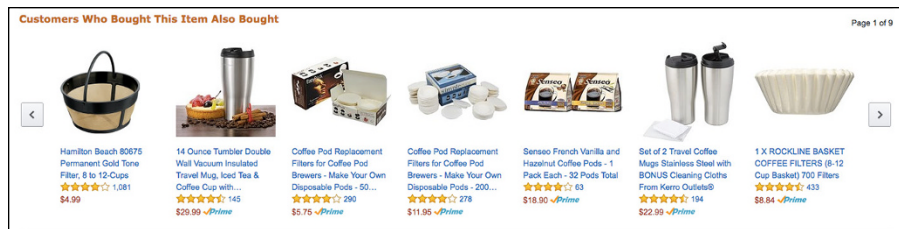
Include reviews, user-submitted content, and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section within your product page. Reviews in particular serve as a form of social proof and are like a personal recommendation. Customer reviews don't have to exist in only written form; they can also be videos. Customer video reviews are one of the best forms of proof you can include on a product page because the video gives potential customers someone to relate to while reviewing your product.

People regard review videos as harder to fake or manipulate than text testimonials, so they carry more weight. The main difference between customer video reviews and third-party pitch videos is that the third-party videos are professionally produced by the business, whereas a customer review video is shot by the customer, likely with his or her cell phone camera. To get more reviews, both in written and video form, follow up with past customers via email and ask for an honest review; you can incentive your customers to leave reviews by offering coupons and contests.

## Cross-sells

Amazon.com does cross-selling well with its Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought section, as shown in Figure 7-5, where the site suggests other products that a customer may want to add to his or her cart based on the product that is currently being viewed. Cross-sells are an effective way to increase your basket size, or offer an alternative, related product that may better suit potential customers' needs, thus ensuring a sale.

**FIGURE 7-5:**  
Amazon offers cross-sells in an attempt to increase the basket size of a customer.



Source: <https://www.amazon.com>

## Grading a Landing Page

In the previous sections of this chapter, we tell you about the most common landing pages and their essential elements, and in this section, we give you some criteria by which to evaluate the effectiveness of your pages. Landing pages come in many shapes and sizes, from short-form lead capture pages to long-form sales



letters, so some of the elements included in the following sections may not apply to the landing page you're evaluating. For example, a long-form sales letter that sells a service is unlikely to use a lead-capture form.

Evaluate your landing pages based on the criteria that apply to *your* pages. The most important thing to keep in mind is that improving each factor in the following list that is relevant to your landing page will have a substantial impact on the conversion rate of your landing page.

- » **Clarity:** You have a matter of seconds to convince new visitors to your landing page that they should stick around. Use the headline, subheadline, images, and anything else immediately visible on the page to answer the following questions for them: "What is it?" and "What does it do for me?"
- » **Congruence:** Nothing sends landing page visitors scurrying away faster than a lack of congruence between wherever they came from and your landing page. The text, offer, and imagery on the landing page should match (ideally exactly) the text and imagery that was in whatever ad or referring traffic source that brought the visitor to the landing page. For example, if you click an ad that states "10% off of winter apparel" and you arrive on a page offering summer apparel, you're going to lose most of your traffic. Keep the visuals (colors, images, fonts, and so on) and offer congruent from the traffic source to the landing page and you'll keep more traffic on your offer.
- » **Visualization:** Typically, an image or graphical representation of the offer increases conversions. Avoid using overused stock and royalty-free imagery that might make your offer appear cheap. Instead, wherever possible, use custom photography or graphics to depict your offer.
- » **Number of fields:** The number of form fields should be appropriate for the offer. For example, high-commitment offers have longer forms, and lower-commitment offers have fewer form fields.



REMEMBER

Don't ask for information that you don't need! If you plan to follow up only via email, just ask for a name and email, at most. In fact, test dropping the name field, too, if you don't plan to personalize your follow-up messages by including the person's name. In general, having fewer form fields leads to a higher conversion rate.

- » **Visible and compelling call-to-action button:** People frequently debate button colors, but one constant is that the button color should contrast (not blend in) with the surrounding design elements. For example, if the background color of your website is sky blue, don't use that sky-blue color as your call-to-action button color.

Second, use a compelling statement as the text on your call-to-action button. "Submit" is not good enough. Test button text that gives a specific command or speaks to the end result (such as "Get Free Instant Access").

- » **Professional design:** The design of your landing page should be of professional quality. If you're using a quality landing page builder tool, the templates provided will take care of most of the design and layout. (We offer recommendations for landing page builder tools in Chapter 16.) Avoid making major changes to these tested layouts and designs until you get more comfortable building landing pages that convert.
- » **Relevant trust icons:** Reputable brands that you do business with or are affiliated with, "As Seen On" logos, and testimonials let your visitors know that they're making a smart decision to give you their contact information or make a purchase.
- » **Clear privacy policies:** Not only are privacy policies and terms of service required to advertise on some sites (including Google), they're also good for conversions.
- » **Visual cues:** The landing page should incorporate arrows, boxes, and other visual devices to draw the eye to the call-to-action area.